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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 003995

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KPAO](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: ANALYST OLOJEDE CLAIMS MBEKI LIKELY TO WIN,  
DLAMINI-ZUMA NEXT PRESIDENT

REF: A. PRETORIA 2533

[1](#)B. PRETORIA 3917

[1](#)C. PRETORIA 3603

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Analyst Dele Olojede claimed that President Thabo Mbeki has essentially sewn up the nomination as ANC president at the upcoming December 16-20 party conference. Mbeki used the power of the incumbency to sideline his rival Jacob Zuma. According to Olojede, ForMin Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma is Mbeki's choice for party Deputy President and likely future President of the country. Businessman Cyril Ramaphosa is the best qualified candidate for the job, but never "made peace" with Mbeki or put together the necessary machinery to win the ANC nomination. END SUMMARY.

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Mbeki's Team Confident  
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[1](#)2. (C) Businessman, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and political analyst Dele Olojede told PolOff November 16 that President Thabo Mbeki has essentially sewn up the nomination as ANC president. (NOTE: Olojede predicted in July that Mbeki or his hand-picked successor would win the ANC race (ref A). END NOTE.) Mbeki's campaign team has counted delegates and is "very confident." Mbeki's victory was "easier than expected." Using the power of incumbency, Mbeki has carefully whittled away at Zuma's support, gaining traction even in KwaZulu-Natal. Promises of patronage by Mbeki's team are much more attractive than "promises of what might be" by Zuma's supporters, Olojede suggested.

[1](#)3. (C) The only question is whether Zuma will force a vote at the December 16-20 ANC congress. Zuma may "see the writing on the wall" and step aside "for the good of the party." However, Olojede believes Zuma is stubborn enough that he may fight to the bitter end, a step that would create resentment among ANC senior leaders.

[1](#)4. (C) On whether Zuma will be charged with corruption before the December conference, Olojede speculated that the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) would likely wait until early 2008 -- although he said there is no doubt that Zuma will be charged. The recent court decision admitting evidence

against Zuma may have sealed his fate (ref B). Olojede noted that it is possible that Mbeki would pardon Zuma for his "service to the country" -- especially if Zuma has the "good sense" to step aside in Polokwane.

15. (C) Commenting on the decision to suspend NPA head Vusi Pikoli (ref C), Olojede said that Mbeki made a calculated decision to protect National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi, well aware of the negative backlash that would result. While Selebi "is probably guilty" and "will likely be prosecuted" at a later date, Mbeki could not allow Pikoli to charge Selebi at such a sensitive time in the ANC succession battle. Selebi is a "loose cannon" and powerful in the party. Pikoli was naive to move against Selebi without consulting Mbeki.

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Dlamini-Zuma as Next President?  
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16. (C) Olojede believes that Mbeki has settled on ForMin Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as his choice for ANC Deputy President, as well as future national President following elections in 2009:

-- Mbeki has always been serious about his commitment to promoting a woman as next President, both because of a genuine commitment to women's rights and as a way to burnish his image as a "progressive" figure. Mbeki would have preferred current Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, but she had "too much baggage." (NOTE: Mlambo-Ngcuka's husband, Bulelani Ngcuka, was head of the National Prosecuting Authority during the corruption investigation of Jacob Zuma. END NOTE.)

-- Dlamini-Zuma is the most senior and respected woman in the ANC leadership. She has the support of the ANC's Women's

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League. Winnie Mandela, who remains a force in the party, supports Dlamini-Zuma.

-- Dlamini-Zuma has broad support in the ANC. She is the one candidate on the lists of both the Mbeki and Zuma camps, making her a safe choice.

-- Dlamini-Zuma is an ethnic Zulu, which after 15 years of "Xhosa rule" is an important -- albeit unspoken -- consideration. Her selection would greatly diminish Jacob Zuma's ability to play the "Zulu card" in KwaZulu-Natal.

17. (C) When asked on live radio whether she would accept the nomination as president, Dlamini-Zuma said November 15 that "ANC cadres never refuse when they are deployed." While Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa was quick to deny that Dlamini-Zuma has "entered the current succession debate," Olojede said that Dlamini-Zuma's comments were part of a "carefully orchestrated" campaign by Mbeki's team to introduce the ForMin as a future presidential candidate.

18. (C) Mbeki has promised Dlamini-Zuma that he will step down as party head in 2009, Olojede believes, although he will not announce this commitment publicly since it would make him a lame duck. However, Olojede noted that Mbeki may have second thoughts about this offer as 2009 approaches, and will size up his options before any public announcement.

19. (C) Commenting on Dlamini-Zuma, Olojede said she is a rather "uninspired" choice. He assessed her tenure as Foreign Minister as "unimpressive," and said Dlamini-Zuma does not have the intellect of other senior ANC leaders. That said, Dlamini-Zuma does not possess Mbeki's main weakness -- that he must win every argument even at the expense of his broader agenda. She would likely avoid

micromanaging government departments as Mbeki is often tempted to do. In any case, Dlamini-Zuma is a far superior choice to Jacob Zuma, Olojede argued, who would have been a "typical African leader," with no principles to govern his tenure.

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Cyril -- What Should Have Been  
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¶10. (C) Olojede commented that Cyril Ramaphosa would have been a better choice for ANC and national President, but made two mistakes:

-- Ramaphosa never made peace with Thabo Mbeki. As detailed in ref A, Ramaphosa felt "snubbed" when Mbeki defeated him for the position in Deputy President in 1994, and refused to attend the Mandela/Mbeki inauguration. In early 2007, Ramaphosa had several opportunities to "invite Mbeki to his ranch for fly fishing" and mend fences -- opportunities that people like businessman Saki Macozoma encouraged Ramaphosa to seize -- but Ramaphosa was "too proud" to reach out.

-- Ramaphosa sat back and waited for the ANC to come to him for the nomination. While publicly campaigning remains largely taboo in the ANC -- as Tokyo Sexwale has learned -- you must work behind the scenes to promote your candidacy. Either because of lack of desire or pride, Ramaphosa never built the machinery necessary to win the party presidency.

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South African Media Disappointing  
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¶11. (C) Olojede lamented the state of political journalism in South Africa, noting that most of the political commentary is based on rumors and speculation. Few if any South African journalists do the "hard slogging" of "working ANC sources" and building networks of contacts. Olojede said the Sunday Times is probably the best quality paper in the country, but other papers like Business Day and the Independent Group papers are disappointing.

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Bio-Note  
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¶12. (C) Nigerian-born Dele Olojede has lived in South Africa

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since 2004. A naturalized U.S. citizen, Olojede occasionally provides analysis on South African politics for the Sunday Times newspaper. The 46-year-old Olojede is involved with an ambitious project to start an African-wide newspaper, based in Johannesburg. He said November 16 that the company has successfully raised the necessary capital and will start hiring journalists in early 2008, with a goal of launching the newspaper in mid-2008. Olojede is personally close to a number of senior ANC leaders, particularly businessman Saki Macozoma. Formerly foreign editor for Newsday, Olojede won a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in April 2005 for his series on the Rwandan genocide. His wife Amma and two children live with him in Johannesburg.

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Comment  
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¶13. (C) As we have reported, the race for ANC president remains too close to call, with both the Mbeki and Zuma camps claiming to be in the lead. Olojede's views likely reflect those of the "black business elite," who largely support Mbeki and have benefited from his economic policies. We cannot confirm Olojede's suggestion that ForMin Dlamini-Zuma is Mbeki's choice for Deputy President of the party and

future national President, although we would not be surprised. She is a safe choice, and her election would help calm tensions in a party that has suffered through a tumultuous year.

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